



Saint Paul Planning Commission

City Hall Conference Center Room 40
15 Kellogg Boulevard West

Agenda

Christopher B. Coleman,
Mayor

August 7, 2015
8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Saint Paul
Planning Commission

Chair
Barbara A. Wencil
First Vice Chair
Elizabeth Reveal
Second Vice Chair
Paula Merrigan
Secretary
Daniel Ward II

Pat Connolly
Anne DeJoy
Daniel Edgerton
Gene Gelgelu
William Lindeke
Kyle Makarios
Melanie McMahon
Gaius Nelson
Rebecca Noecker
Christopher Ochs
Trevor Oliver
Julie Padilla
Emily Shively
Terri Thao
Wendy Underwood
Jun-Li Wang
David Wickiser

Planning Director
Donna Drummond

I. Approval of minutes of July 10, 2015

II. Chair's Announcements

III. Planning Director's Announcements

**IV. PUBLIC HEARING: Gold Line Station Area Plans – Item from the Neighborhood Planning Committee. (Continued from the July 24th public hearing).
(*Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617*)**

V. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. (*Tom Beach, 651/266-9086*)

OLD BUSINESS

#15-134-559 Taco Bell/Border Foods – Conditional use permit for drive-through sales and to increase the maximum number of off-street parking spaces, and variances of minimum floor area ratio (0.5 required, 0.11 proposed), window and door openings of front façade length (50% required, 47% proposed), and interior parking lot landscaping (15% required, 12% proposed). 565 Snelling Avenue North, SW corner at Edmund.
(*Jake Reilly, 651/266-6618*)

NEW BUSINESS

#15-13-138-295 Joan Bassing – Reestablishment of nonconforming use as a triplex. 900-902 Jenks Avenue, between Forest and Mendota. (*Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617*)

#15-139-934 Kowalski Companies – Rezone from R2 One-Family Residential to B2 Community Business. 1261 Grand Avenue, NE corner at Syndicate.
(*Mike Richardson, 651/266-6621*)

VI. Transportation Committee

Robert Street Transitway Alternatives Analysis - Approve resolution supporting conclusion of the alternatives analysis. (*Michelle Beaulieu, 651/266-6620*)

VII. Big Picture Project: 2015 Progress Report – Informational presentation by Gretchen Nicholls, Program Officer, Twin Cities LISC.

VIII. Comprehensive Planning Committee

IX. Neighborhood Planning Committee

X. Communications Committee

XI. Task Force/Liaison Reports

XII. Old Business

XIII. New Business

XIV. Adjournment

Information on agenda items being considered by the Planning Commission and its committees can be found at www.stpaul.gov/ped, click on Planning.

Planning Commission Members: PLEASE call Sonja Butler, 651/266-6573, if unable to attend.

**Saint Paul Planning Commission &
Heritage Preservation Commission
MASTER MEETING CALENDAR**

WEEK OF AUGUST 3-7, 2015

Mon (3) _____

Tues (4) _____

3:30-5:00 p.m. **Comprehensive Planning Committee**
(Merritt Clapp-Smith, 651/266-6547)

13th Floor – CHA
25 Fourth Street West

DNR Mississippi River Critical Area Rulemaking – Continued discussion of comments on proposed rules. (Allan Torstenson, 651/266-6579, and Josh Williams, 651/266-6659)

Weds (5) _____

Thurs (6) _____

Fri (7) _____

8:30-11:00 a.m. **Planning Commission Meeting**
(Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556)

Room 40 City Hall
Conference Center
15 Kellogg Blvd.

PUBLIC HEARING: Gold Line Station Area Plans – Item from the Neighborhood Planning Committee. (Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)

Zoning..... SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. (Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

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(Mike Richardson, 651/266-6621)

Transportation Committee.... Robert Street Transitway Alternatives Analysis - Approve resolution supporting conclusion of the alternatives analysis. (Michelle Beaulieu, 651/266-6620)

Informational Presentation.... Big Picture Project: 2015 Progress Report – Informational presentation by Gretchen Nicholls, Program Officer, Twin Cities LISC.

**The Planning Commission
minutes from the meeting
on Friday,
July 10' 2015
are not available at this
time.**



Sonja Butler



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

375 Jackson Street, Suite 220
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1806

Telephone: 651-266-8989
Facsimile: 651-266-9124
Web: www.stpaul.gov/dsi

REVISED SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

**Tuesday, August 11, 2015
2nd Floor Conference Room
375 Jackson Street, Suite 218**

| <u>Time</u> | <u>Project Name and Location</u> |
|-------------|--|
| 9:00 | Capitol Ridge Hotel 161 St. Anthony Avenue Reconstruct existing parking lot and other site improvements |
| 9:30 | Children's Museum 10 West 7 th Street Small expansion of existing museum building |
| 10:10 | Saint Paul Parks 1225 Estabrook Drive Expand existing parking lots at Como Park and associated site improvements |

Applicants should attend this meeting.

At this meeting you will have a chance to discuss the site plan for your project with Saint Paul's Site Plan Review Committee. The Committee is made up of City staff from Zoning, Traffic, Sewers, Water, Public Works, Fire Inspections, and Parks. You are encouraged to bring your engineer, architect, or contractor with you to handle any technical questions raised by city staff. The purpose of this meeting is to simplify the review process by letting the applicant meet with staff from a number of departments at one time. Staff will make comments and ask questions based on their review of the plans. By the end of the meeting you will know if the site plan can be approved as submitted or if revisions will be required. Staff will take minutes at the meeting and email you a copy.

The meeting room is on the skyway level and 25' to your left as you get out of the elevator.

Parking

A few free parking spaces are available in our visitor parking lot off of 6th Street at Jackson. Parking is also available at on-street meters. The closest parking ramp is on Jackson one block south of our office between 4th and 5th Street.

If you have questions, please contact Tom Beach at 651-266-9086 or tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

FOR THE FULL ZONING COMMITTEE AGENDA and SUMMARY

of this packet go to the link below:

<http://stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=3436>

Thank you

Sonja Butler

Planning Commission Secretary/Office Assistant IV

1400 City Hall Annex

25 Fourth Street West

Saint Paul, MN 55102

651-266-6573

Transportation Committee Staff Report

Committee date: July 13, 2015

| | |
|--|---|
| Project Name | <i>Robert Street Transitway Alternatives Analysis</i> |
| Geographic Scope | <i>Downtown Saint Paul to Highway 110, West Saint Paul</i> |
| Ward(s) | <i>Ward 2</i> |
| District Council(s) | <i>Districts 3, 17</i> |
| Project Description | <i>The Robert Street Transitway Alternatives Analysis (AA) evaluation process identified two alternatives, a Robert Street Arterial Bus Rapid Transit and Robert Street Streetcar, which can meet the goals for the project. The steering committee has acted to conclude the AA without selection of a single alternative to allow for additional local land use planning. The City of Saint Paul is being asked for a resolution supporting the evaluation process of the study, the conclusions of the study, and the decision to conclude the AA with two alternatives for further study at a later date.</i> |
| Project Contact | <i>Joe Morneau</i> |
| Contact email/phone | <i>Joe.Morneau@co.dakota.mn.us; 952-891-7986</i> |
| Lead Agency/Department | <i>Dakota County Regional Rail Authority</i> |
| Purpose of Project/Plan | <i>Technical analysis evaluating numerous potential transitway route alignments and modes for the Robert Street corridor.</i> |
| Planning References | <i>Comp Plan, Transportation Chapter, Policy T2.9 Work with Metro Transit to study and implement possible corridors for new bus rapid transit, LRT, streetcars, or commuter rail lines serving Saint Paul.</i> |
| Project stage | <i>Planning</i> |
| General Timeline | <i>Dakota and Ramsey County Regional Rail Authorities to officially adopt AA in September 2015.</i> |
| District Council position (if applicable) | <i>unknown</i> |
| Level of Committee Involvement | <i>Recommend resolution to Planning Commission and to City Council.</i> |
| Previous Committee action | <i>None</i> |
| Level of Public Involvement | <i>Five rounds of open house meetings, multiple presentations to community groups, distribution of project updates and documentation through project website.</i> |
| Public Hearing | <i>No</i> |
| Public Hearing Location | <i>n/a</i> |
| Primary Funding Source(s) | <i>Federal Transit Administration; Dakota and Ramsey County Regional Rail Authorities</i> |
| Cost | <i>\$1,357,500</i> |

| | |
|--|---|
| Staff recommendation | <i>Recommend approval.</i> |
| Action item requested of the Committee | <i>Recommend approval of the resolution to the Planning Commission and City Council.</i> |
| Committee recommendation | <i>Approved recommendation of the resolution to the Planning Commission and the City Council.</i> |
| Committee vote | <i>Unanimous.</i> |

STUDY CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

A technical recommendation for Arterial BRT on Robert Street was presented to the Steering Committee in May 2014 and to the public in June 2014. Following the evaluation process, continued interest in the Modern Streetcar alternative was expressed by many project stakeholders due to the expected benefits to local economic development.

The Steering Committee has acted to conclude the AA study at this time without taking action to select a single Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), and is advancing the Robert Street Arterial BRT and Modern Streetcar alternatives for further consideration. This decision was made to allow more time to conduct additional land use planning, to update local comprehensive plans that guide development, and to target capital investments that would encourage additional density within the corridor. Following these local planning processes, the Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority will consider options for further evaluation of the final two alternatives with the intent of selecting an LPA.



HOW CAN YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ROBERT STREET TRANSITWAY?

- View AA study documents on the project website: robertstreettransit.com
- Email questions and comments: robertstreettransit@co.dakota.mn.us
- Contact county staff:
Dakota County
952-891-7986
Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority
651-266-2760

ROBERT STREET TRANSITWAY ALTERNATIVES STUDY

RAMSEY COUNTY
Regional Railroad Authority

DCRRA Dakota County
Regional Railroad Authority



FINAL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAY 2015

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The **Robert Street Transitway Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study** was a step forward in advancing a transit improvement project focused on identifying more frequent service and faster transit travel times between downtown Saint Paul and areas within north central Dakota County. The AA phase of development began in mid-2012, and was a joint effort between the Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Oversight of the AA was provided by a Steering Committee and guided by a Technical Advisory Committee. Both committees were made up of representatives from local communities within the Robert Street study area and from regional and state agencies.



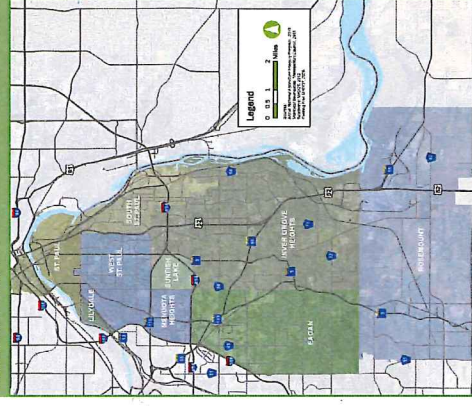
What is the purpose of the Robert Street Transitway?

The purpose of the Robert Street Transitway is to provide the necessary transit infrastructure and service to meet the long-term regional mobility and local accessibility needs between downtown St. Paul and areas within Dakota County.

This project intends to address the following issues:

- Forecasted growth in travel demand resulting from continued growth in population and employment
- Limited transit service and time-efficient transit options
- Needs of people who depend on transit
- Roadway congestion and shift toward multimodal investments
- Regional objectives for growth

STUDY AREA



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Extensive public outreach was completed as part of the AA study. Open houses were held at five different times during the process, and each round included a meeting in both Saint Paul and West St. Paul. In addition, over 30 individual meetings with neighborhood and business organizations, advocacy groups, and under-represented populations ensured continuous input throughout the process. The feedback collected throughout the study was integrated into the decision-making process for each project stage.

WHAT ALTERNATIVES WERE EVALUATED?

At the beginning of the study, based on the project goals, over 30 potential routes were identified and screened. An initial set of seven mode/alignment alternatives were then advanced based on the results of the screening process. Preliminary evaluation then narrowed the analysis down to three final alternatives:

- Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along Robert Street
- Modern Streetcar along Robert Street
- Highway BRT along Trunk Highway (TH) 52

Service characteristics for the three final alternatives:

| ALTERNATIVE | DISTANCE | TRAVEL TIME | FREQUENCY | ESTIMATED WEEKDAY BOARDINGS |
|--------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Robert Street Arterial BRT | 5.8 mi. | 30 min. | Every 15 min. | 3,100 |
| Robert Street Modern Streetcar | 5.4 mi. | 29 min. | Every 15 min. | 3,000 |
| TH 52 Highway BRT | 10.7 mi. | 24 min. | Every 15 min. | 2,300 |

HOW WERE THE ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED?

For each of the final alternatives, the following characteristics were defined: alignment, stations, service plans, traffic controls, and operating facilities. The alternatives were then evaluated based on a series of technical evaluation criteria. These measures were developed from project goals and objectives set through public input at the beginning of the AA:

- Goal 1: Improve mobility and accessibility
- Goal 2: Enhance the effectiveness of transit service within the corridor
- Goal 3: Provide cost effective and financially feasible transit solutions
- Goal 4: Support and enhance existing development
- Goal 5: Support healthier communities and sound environmental practices

WHAT WERE THE EVALUATION RESULTS?

| | Robert Street Arterial BRT | Robert Street Modern Streetcar | TH 52 Highway BRT via Lafayette |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| GOAL 1: Improve mobility and accessibility Key differences between the alternatives: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater overall ridership potential for Arterial BRT and Modern Streetcar compared to Highway BRT | | | |
| GOAL 2: Enhance the effectiveness of transit service within the corridor Key differences between the alternatives: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better accessibility for Modern Streetcar and Arterial BRT compared to Highway BRT | | | |
| GOAL 3: Provide cost effective and financially feasible transit solutions Key differences between the alternatives: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower capital costs for Arterial BRT (\$29 million) and Highway BRT (\$49 million) compared to Modern Streetcar (\$399 million) [Cost estimated in 2015 dollars] Lower operations and maintenance cost per rider for Arterial BRT (\$3.97 per rider) and Highway BRT (\$4.49 per rider) compared to Modern Streetcar (\$8.33 per rider) | | | |
| GOAL 4: Support and enhance existing communities and planned development Key differences between the alternatives: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater potential to directly serve planned development/redevelopment and encourage transit-oriented development in areas identified for future development/redevelopment for Modern Streetcar and Arterial BRT Greater potential to stimulate real estate development for Modern Streetcar compared to Arterial BRT, based upon additional economic analysis | | | |
| GOAL 5: Support healthy communities and sound environmental practices Key differences between the alternatives: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for fewer impacts related to private property, traffic congestion, and community resources with Highway BRT | | | |
| Total | | | |



city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number _____
date _____

Accepting the Robert Street Transitway Alternatives Analysis Conclusion

WHEREAS, the Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority (DCRRA) and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) serve as co-project sponsors in the conduct of the Robert Street Transitway Alternatives Analysis (AA), formalized through the execution of a joint powers agreement (JPA) in August 2011; and

WHEREAS, in July 2012, the DCRRA and RCRRA commenced an AA compliant with the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) New Starts program; and

WHEREAS, the JPA has defined an oversight structure for the AA that established a Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee co-chaired by the DCRRA and RCRRA and incorporated municipalities and agencies within the study area, including the city of Saint Paul, into the evaluation and decision making processes of the AA; and

WHEREAS, the AA established a study framework based on goals formed by the Steering Committee that guided a technical analysis evaluating numerous potential route alignments and modes; and

WHEREAS, the AA produced a limited number of alternatives for detailed analysis and consideration by the Steering Committee; and

WHEREAS, The AA incorporated numerous opportunities for public and stakeholder involvement throughout the course of the study, including open house meetings, stakeholder presentations, and regular distribution of information on the AA through email and website communications; and

WHEREAS, the AA evaluation process developed and overseen by the Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee identified two alternatives, Robert Street Arterial Bus Rapid Transit and Robert Street Streetcar, that can meet the goals established for the project; and

WHEREAS, the Steering Committee has acted to conclude the AA without selection of a single alternative to allow for additional local land use planning to better understand and facilitate the potential economic development correlation with a future transit project, allow for the formation of regional policy on the development and operation for the modes under consideration, further consider FTA's requirements for land use planning in cities' comprehensive planning processes, and further coordinate with the City of St. Paul on its streetcar system planning efforts.

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission supports the evaluation process conducted by the AA and its conclusions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission supports the decision by the Steering Committee to conclude the AA with two alternatives that will be carried forward for consideration in further study at a later date; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission recommends that the City Council pass a resolution supporting the process, its conclusions, and moving forward with two alternatives for consideration and study at a later date.